

APRIL 21, 1978

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR INNOVATIVE VOLUNTARY ACTION
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: THERE IS A REAL TRADITION IN THE UNITED STATES OF
INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERING TO ALLEVIATE COMMUNITY
PROBLEMS. BUT WHO ARE THOSE CONCERNED PEOPLE?
ARE THEY YOUNG OR OLD, WELL-OFF OR POOR? NEXT ON THE
VOICE OF AMERICA -- A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA
ZERANSKI ON SOME OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER EFFORTS BEING
HONORED IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

NARR: THIS IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK IN THE UNITED STATES. DURING
THIS OBSERVANCE, NINE UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATIONS
OR INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO RECEIVE THE NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER ACTIVIST AWARDS, AND FIFTY MORE ARE BEING GIVEN
CITATIONS FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES. NATIONAL VOLUNTEER
WEEK IS AN ANNUAL EVENT, INITIATED 27 YEARS AGO BY A
BUSINESSMAN WHO WANTED TO BRING RECOGNITION TO THE GRASS
ROOTS VOLUNTEER. IN 1970 A NONPROFIT PRIVATE ORGANIZATION
KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION TOOK OVER
THE PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A SPONSORING BUSINESS
CORPORATION. EVERY YEAR, 7 TO 10 THOUSAND NOMINATIONS FROM
ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY ARE SENT TO THE HEADQUARTERS IN
WASHINGTON, D.C. KENN ALLEN, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR
VOLUNTARY ACTION, DESCRIBES THE PROFILE OF AN AMERICAN
VOLUNTEER.

TAPE: CUT ONE: ALLEN

"VOLUNTEERS ARE YOUNG. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF
VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY AMONG BOTH HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE
STUDENTS, AND A WHOLE NEW EFFORT TO INVOLVE EVEN THE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AS VOLUNTEERS. VOLUNTEERS
ARE ALSO OLD. ONE OF THE MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS OVER
THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN THE CREATION OF VOLUNTEER
PROGRAMS WHICH WOULD REACH OUT TO THE RETIRED PEOPLE

TAPE: (CONT'D)

AND BRING THEM BACK INTO ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THEIR COMMUNITY. MOST VOLUNTEERS CERTAINLY HAVE PAYING JOBS IN ADDITION TO THEIR VOLUNTEER WORK, AND IN FACT ONE OF THE NEW TRENDS IN VOLUNTEERISM....IS TO WORK THROUGH BUSINESS CORPORATIONS TO RECRUIT INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES AS VOLUNTEERS IN THEIR SPARE TIME. BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE HOUSEWIVES AND OTHERS WHOSE LIFE SITUATIONS ARE SUCH THAT THEY MAY NOT HAVE A FULL TIME PAYING JOB."

NARR: A DECADE AGO THE PREVAILING VOLUNTEERS WERE MIDDLE AGED HOUSE-WIVES. TODAY THE TYPICAL VOLUNTEER IS MALE OR FEMALE, MAY COME FROM ANY ECONOMIC LEVEL. EVERY ETHNIC GROUP, EVERY RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL CAUSE HAS ITS VOLUNTEERS. IF MIDDLE CLASS WHITE VOLUNTEERS PREVAIL, IT IS ONLY BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION. OUT OF ALL THESE GROUPS, VOLUNTEERS NOMINATED BY THEIR COMMUNITIES FOR THE NATIONAL CITATIONS AND AWARDS ARE SCREENED BY AN INDEPENDENT PANEL OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS. THIS YEAR, THE WINNERS WERE BROUGHT IN, WITH ALL EXPENSES PAID, FIRST TO NEW YORK WHERE THEY WERE GREETED BY THE MAYOR AND THEN TO WASHINGTON, D.C. FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE CITATIONS AND SILVER PLAQUES SUITABLY INSCRIBED TO HONOR THE 9 FINALISTS. THE INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS BEING HONORED DURING NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK HAVE BEEN ADVOCATES FOR SOME CAUSE OR WERE INNOVATIVE IN REACHING OUT TO HELP ANOTHER PERSON. AMONG THOSE RECEIVING THE AWARDS ARE 700 YOUNG PEOPLE IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK, WHO PROVIDE COMFORT, FRIENDSHIP TO 300 SENIOR CITIZENS; A PARENTS ASSOCIATION, THAT FOUGHT FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL UNIT FOR CHILDREN IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, WHICH WAS TO BE CLOSED; UNITED PEOPLE IN THE STATE OF IOWA WHO FOUGHT WITH THEIR STATE DEPARTMENT OF

NARR: (CONT'D) EDUCATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE SMALL RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEM; GEORGIA MORIHAWA, DEAF FROM BIRTH, WHO SPENT NEARLY THIRTY YEARS AS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE DEAF IN HAWAII; MARGARET WORTHINGTON FROM HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, WHO CREATED A PROGRAM OF COUNSELING AND SUPPORT FOR WIVES AND FAMILIES OF MEN SENTENCED TO PRISON; DR. VERONICA MAZ OF WASHINGTON, D.C. A COLLEGE PROFESSOR, WHO FOUNDED A SHELTER FOR HOMELESS WOMEN; DR. HERMAN MAYERSBURG, A PSYCHIATRIST, WHO WITH A SMALL GROUP OF ASSOCIATES FOUNDED A MOBILE MEDICAL CARE PROJECT TO BRING FREE OR LOW COST MEDICAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND. THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION IS AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR THOUSANDS OF SIMILAR GROUPS AND PROJECTS. KENN ALLEN AGAIN:

TAPE: CUT TWO: ALLEN

"THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION WAS CREATED IN 1970 FOR THE SIMPLE PURPOSE OF STIMULATING AND STRENGTHENING THE INVOLVEMENT OF VOLUNTEER IN PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITIES IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES. AFTER AN EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS BY NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL LEADERS, IT WAS DECIDED THAT A LOCAL ORGANIZATION WAS NEEDED WHICH COULD UNDERTAKE CERTAIN TASKS WHICH COULD IMPROVE BOTH THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN THIS COUNTRY: THINGS LIKE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ABOUT OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS, THE CREATION OF LOCAL VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTERS AS RECRUITMENT AND REFERRAL MECHANISMS FOR INDIVIDUALS TO SERVE AS VOLUNTEERS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE CAPABILITIES OF VOLUNTEER LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS."

NARR: THE NATIONAL CENTER IS RUN BY A PAID STAFF OF 15 PEOPLE. THE BUDGET IS OVER A HALF MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR. MOST SUPPORT COMES FROM PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS. AN ACTIVE VOLUNTARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS SERVES AS POLICY MAKERS. THE CENTER PUBLISHES AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO THE ISSUES

NARR: OF VOLUNTARISM. THE CENTER'S TRAINING WORKSHOP, SEMINARS
(CONT'D) AND CONFERENCES, ORGANIZED IN MANY LOCATIONS, WERE ATTENDED
LAST YEAR BY OVER 10,000 VOLUNTEER WORKERS.

TAPE: CUT THREE: ALLEN

"OUR FIRST...PRIORITY IS THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF
A NETWORK OF LOCAL VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTERS, AND THERE
ARE NOW SOME 300 IN COMMUNITIES LARGE AND SMALL AROUND
THE COUNTRY. THE VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTERS HAVE TWO
PRIMARY PURPOSES: THE FIRST IS TO IDENTIFY NEEDS IN THE
COMMUNITY THAT CAN BE MET BY VOLUNTEERS AND TO RECRUIT
INDIVIDUALS TO SERVE IN THOSE JOBS; THE SECOND TASK
THAT THE VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTERS UNDERTAKE IS TO SERVE
AS A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCE FOR OTHER HUMAN
SERVICE AGENCIES IN THE COMMUNITY. A VOLUNTARY ACTION
CENTER MIGHT WORK WITH A HOSPITAL, FOR EXAMPLE, TO IDENTITY
THE KINDS OF JOBS THE VOLUNTEER CAN DO, TO DESIGN TRAINING
PROGRAMS FOR STAFF ON HOW TO WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS, AND
ACTUALLY RECRUIT AND PLACE THE VOLUNTEERS IN THE HOSPITAL."

NARR: THERE IS NO PROBLEM OR ISSUE IN THIS COUNTRY WHICH IS
NOT IN SOME WAY BEING ADDRESSED BY A VOLUNTEER, AND
VIRTUALLY EVERY PERSON SOME TIME OR OTHER IN HIS LIFE
SERVES AS A VOLUNTEER.

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